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ABSTRACT

A description is given of the activities that occurred during the initial three years of planning and implementing a staff development program aimed at effective teaching and supervision in the Glendale, California, Unified School District. The report focuses on the third component of a five-year master plan, the planning and implementation of a staff development plan to assist teachers in refining instructional skills and to help school administrators in their role as instructional supervisors. The activities described are grouped into four key areas: (1) planning; (2) training; (3) follow-up; and (4) principal support. Each of these key areas represents an essential component of successful staff development practices substantiated by research. Twenty-one references are included. (JD)

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IMPLEMENTING A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BASED ON RESEARCH FINDING -- THE GLENDALE MODEL

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IMPLEMENTING A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BASED ON RESEARCH FINDINGS -- THE GLENDALE MODEL

A body of research has accumulated during the past decade that provides valuable direction for those engaged in implementing staff development programs in local school districts. What follows is a description of the activities that occurred during the initial 3 years of planning and implementing a staff development program aimed at effective teaching and supervision in the Glendale, California, Unified School District. The activities described are grouped into four key areas, each area representing an essential component of successful staff development practices and substantiated by the research.

The results of recent research tells us that effective staff development programs:

1. are well planned and involve participants in the planning.
2. provide training which includes the presentation of theory, modeling, practice, and low risk feedback,
3. provide for follow-up procedures so participants may engage in practice, feedback, and coaching after the initial training, and
4. have the support and participation of school principals.

These important findings served as a guide to the planning and implementation of the program in Glendale. The basis for the Glendale model was the development of a Five Year Master Plan for Staff Development. Prior to this effort, in-service education activities in the district were often disjointed with little overall direction and coordination. A large share of the staff development function could be characterized by the "one shot" approach with little attention to follow-up activities by teachers who participated in workshops. The role of the principal in planning, implementing, and participating in programs was vague with little attention devoted to expectations.

The new Five Year Master Plan consists of three components. The first is the creation of an ongoing organizational plan for determining staff development needs and delivering services. The second component identifies short-term content specific areas of need such as inservice in computer literacy, the teaching of writing or second language acquisition. The final component establishes a district-wide program for training in effective teaching and supervision. Our attention in this article focuses on the third component, the planning and implementation of a staff development plan to assist teachers in refining instructional skills and to help school administrators in their role as instructional supervisors.

PLANNING

As in any major change effort, comprehensive planning which involves those to be affected by the change is vital. This basic principle has been documented in its application to effective staff development planning (Hall and Loucks 1978, Gerald and Sloan 1984, Lezotte 1984, Berman and McLaughlin 1978).

Good long-range planning begins with a vision, at least among the key planners (Hickman and Silva 1984). The vision in Glendale is to establish and maintain a climate of professional collaboration. This means that teachers work with other teachers, as well as administrators in perfecting instructional skills. There is a spirit of collegiality as staff members not only discuss with one another about effective classroom instructional practices but engage in such supportive activities as peer observation and feedback. The vision is one where teachers and administrators share a common understanding of effective teaching and work together in their respective roles to achieve it. It is an attempt to raise the level of professionalism by increasing collaboration and reducing teacher isolationism. The results of these efforts are aimed at increased student achievement.

The first step toward the development of a long-range plan of staff development which would help achieve the vision was the formation of a special staff planning committee. Membership on the committee was composed of at least one representative from every school in the district. A majority of committee members were teachers but site level and central office administrators were also part of the group. After eight months of study and deliberation, the district Five-Year Master Plan was developed.

A key component of the recommended plan was that during a five-year period, every certificated staff member in the district would be involved in a five-day training program in the Essential Elements of Instruction. In addition, the plan stressed the importance of site level administrator participation, not only in the Elements of Instruction training, but Clinical Supervision training as well. The report also stressed the importance of follow-up activities after the initial training.

In order to involve large numbers of staff in the initial planning, strategies were developed to accomplish this important need. Committee representatives, therefore, were asked to communicate with their site level colleagues formally and informally during the planning process. District-wide publications kept staff members informed of the committee's progress. School principals were informed on a regular basis of the plans as they emerged. When the report was completed and the recommendations submitted to the Board of Education, there was wide support among the staff because of their involvement in the planning process.

Planners must remember that staff development involves change in people. A rationale for including this principle in the planning for change is provided by the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Hall and Loucks (1978). Teachers have different levels of concerns at various stages of program implementation and dealing with such changing concerns is part of good planning.

Following the adoption of the Five-Year Master Plan, several months were spent in getting the staff ready to move forward. The first step was to thoroughly brief members of the administrative staff. Administrator members of the planning committee provided information to their colleagues concerning the plan and its implementation. Teacher members of the committee presented reports to their respective site staffs. Regional (high school attendance areas) faculty meetings were held later, when an overview of the Elements of Instruction training program was outlined. Teachers were also informed that while the program was voluntary, it was the goal that all would participate in the initial training during the next five years. Incentives such as released time, salary credit, etc., were also explained at these orientation meetings.

As the time drew near to begin the first round of training workshops, an informational meeting of site principals was called to relate to them the key role they were to play in the success of the plan. One of the principal primary tasks was to choose the first group of teachers to participate in the training. The strategy for insuring that the program got off to a good start was to see that a quality group of participants was involved in the initial training sessions. Principals were therefore asked to select teachers respected by their colleagues, who had a desire to participate, and who would be willing to share with the faculty about the training once completed.

In order to build a solid base for support, school site support teams were formed. The teams were composed of the three teachers from each school selected to participate in the first round of training and the site principal. The initial responsibility for the team was to be the catalyst for generating a positive tone for the training. As time passed, school support teams expanded as more teachers were trained and became the key group for follow-up activities at the site level.

TRAINING

The work of Joyce and Showers (1980, 1983) serves as a model for training aimed at providing participants with skills they can apply in the work place. The components of the training are: (1) presentation of theory (theoretical base and verbal description of an instructional technique or skills), (2) modeling (enactment of the teaching skill or strategy through a live demonstration), (3) practice (trying out a new skill or strategy), and (4) low level feedback (receiving information on "how you are doing" from trainers or peers in a non-threatening manner). As participants move through this continuum, their level of skill and their ability to transfer

what is learned to their classroom teaching increases. Similar findings have been reported by McKinnan (1976), Wood and Thompson (1980), Cruickshank (1968), and Stallings (1982).

The content of the five-day training sessions in Glendale focused around the acquisition of skills by the participants in (1) teaching to the objective, (2) teaching to the correct level of difficulty, (3) monitoring learning and adjusting the teaching, and (4) the utilization of principles of learning (motivation, active participation, anticipatory set, reinforcement, retention, and closure).

The verbal description and theoretical base of the Elements of Instruction were presented in large and mid-sized groups. Videotapes of teachers engaged in instruction provided excellent demonstrations of the skills being learned by the participants. The trainers modeled the teaching skills being taught. In order for the trainees to begin to practice skills, small group practicums were put into place. Participants presented brief teaching lessons and received positive feedback from their colleagues and trainers. By the conclusion of the five-day session, most participants were ready to begin to practice the skills learned with students in their respective classrooms. Principals and teachers now shared a common vocabulary that formed the basis of discussions and demonstrations about effective teaching.

In order to sharpen school administrators skills in observations and feedback utilizing the Elements of Instruction, a six-day training program in Clinical Supervision began just two months after the conclusion of the Elements of Instruction training. The content of the training centered on the acquisition of skills in observation, analysis, and conferencing. As in the previous workshops, participants saw the application of theory through videotaped demonstrations and modeling by the trainers. A considerable amount of time was devoted to practicing the newly acquired skills and

receiving feedback in the training sessions.

FOLLOW-UP

The vital follow-up component is most often missing in staff development programs. Again, the work of Joyce and Showers (1982, 1983) points to the need for follow-up after the initial training experience. The study of theory, the observation of demonstrations, and practice with feedback enable workshop participants to develop a skill to the point where it can be used in a "sheltered" situation. However, to insure the transfer of newly acquired skills to the classroom requires additional follow-up. Such follow-up begins with the trainee practicing the newly acquired skills in the classroom. This effort can often be facilitated by opportunities to engage in "study groups" with other trained teachers. Such groups provide the opportunity to share experiences and discuss new knowledge with colleagues. The desirability of such support groups has been reported by Bentzen (1974) and Sparks (1983).

The highest level of follow-up is coaching. Joyce and Showers (1983) research shows a definite increase in on-the-job application to new skills when coaching is provided. Coaching involves the observation of teachers utilizing the newly acquired skills by a trained observer who provides feedback. Coaching in the use of new skills may be provided by another teacher, an administrator, or trainer.

In a recent study, Showers (1984) documents the effectiveness of peer coaching. Peer coaching provides not only a vehicle to analyze the application of new skills in the classroom, but also provides a form for companionship and collegiality and reduces teacher isolationism. In addition to Joyce and Showers (1982), other studies point to the valuable practice of teachers helping one another. Blumberg (1980) noted that teachers informally depend on peers for support and instructional help.

DeAngelis (1979) documents that beginning teachers found their principals and supervisors somewhat helpful,, but not as much as their colleagues. Little's (1981) study found that staff development efforts were most likely to be successful when a "norm of collegiality and experimentation" existed. Peer coaching provides such supportive opportunities.

In Glendale, the primary vehicle for follow-up comes through the school site support team. This group is composed of the principal and all other members of the faculty trained in the Elements of Instruction at a particular school. The size of the group expands as more staff participate in the training. The purpose of the team is to assist in the application of the Elements of Instruction in the classroom. The group is asked to engage in the following types of activities:

(1) Discuss the use of Elements of Instruction as they are tried in classroom settings.

(2) Clarify questions and concerns as they arise.

(3) Provide support for teachers to engage in practice activities. Teachers in the early stages of applying new skills are asked to concentrate on one or two areas and then expand as their confidence grows. Videotaping lessons can be helpful at this stage.

(4) Provide opportunity for peer observation and feedback among the participants. The principal plays a key role in facilitating the movement of one teacher to another's classroom by providing coverage or arranging for a substitute teascher.

(5) Utilize the assistance of one or more of the district's mentor teachers. Mentors have had additional training in the Elements of Instruction, as well as training in techniques of peer observation and feedback. Classroom teachers are encouraged to visit mentor teacher classes or invite a mentor to observe one of their lessons being taught.

The second major vehicle for follow-up is through the school principal. Because all principals have participated in the training, they share a common vocabulary and understanding with their faculty on effective instructional practices. In addition, principals have had training, through Clinical Supervision, in observing teachers, analyzing what they see, and providing constructive feedback. The emphasis is on the role of the principal as a supervisor of instruction. In this process, teachers see principals as leaders of instruction and confidence in their leadership grows. At the same time, principals gain a renewed sense of confidence in their abiity to assist teachers where it counts the most --in the classroom.

This collegial approach between the teacher and principal meets one of the primary goals of the program, that of providing a common ground for instructional improvement by working togther. In addition, the school site support team serves as a vehicle to promote constructive dialogue and sharing among teachers. The combination results in a renewed opportunity for professionalism.

PRINCIPAL SUPPORT

How many supposedly well planned staff development programs for classroom teachers have failed because they did not have the support or participation of the school principal? Probably there are more such cases than any of us care to recall. This fact of life however, should come as no surprise. The research is clear, in order for staff development programs to succeed. the site administrator is key. The Rand Study of Educational Innovation (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978) concluded that the major factor affecting success of new programs was administrator support. Stallings and Mohlman (1981) found that teachers improved most in schools where the principal was supportive of teachers and consisted in communicating school policies. Prince (1984) as well as Gerald and Sloan (1984) point to the

value of school principal's involvement in staff development as a critical factor to effective schools.

In Glendale, members of the administrative staff were involved in each step of the staff development planning process and now play a key role in implementing the program. Principals and central office staff served on the original planning committee with teachers. Perhaps most important, principals participated in the initial training sessions of Elements of Instruction with members of their staff. Not only did principals participate in the initial training, but all certificated central office managers as well. This participation did more than any one thing to show the district's commitment to the program. Following the training in the Elements of Instruction, all administrators at the site and central office level received training in Clinical Supervision.

As has already been described, school principals have been assigned two major responsibilities in implementing the program. First, each principal serves as the leader of the school site support team designed to assist teachers in implementing what had been learned in the Elements of Instruction training through practice, feedback, and coaching. Secondly, principals assist teachers to refine and reinforce instructional skills by utilizing techniques learned in their Clinical Supervision training.

To help the principals succeed in their role as instructional supervisors, a follow-up procedure in Clinical Supervision was established. This follow-up activity began by devoting a portion of each monthly principals' meeting to Clinical Supervision practice and review. At these meetings, time was devoted to reviewing the Elements of Instruction, techniques for classroom observation, analysis of teaching and conducting teacher conferences. To assist in this effort, videotaped teaching lessons were shown and principals were asked to identify teaching techniques using the Elements of Instruction as a criteria. Administrators also conducted

teacher conferences before their colleagues and received feedback.

To facilitate peer coaching among principals, administrators were divided into teams of two or three members. Borrowing ideas from the Peer-Assistant Leadership for Principals (PAS) program of the Far West Laboratory (1986), the team members assisted one another observing teachers and sharing ideas in the analysis of the lesson. Team members also observed one another conduct a conference and joined in its critique.

The practice and review meetings were also used to discuss and monitor the principal's role as school site support team leader. Reports were presented on progress and problems involved at the site level. After several months into the program, principals were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire on the utilization of the Elements of Instruction at their respective schools. The key concerns raised by the principals were how to deal with the reluctant teacher, how to facilitate their role as supervisor and evaluator, as well as how to engage more teachers in peer observation and feedback sessions. These concerns were used as a basis for discussions at future meetings. Principal's meetings, therefore, became more than dealing with the routines of management but forums for professional growth.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Described above are the efforts of one school district to apply lessons from research in the planning and implementation of a staff development program. As in any such effort, there are areas of considerable gain, as well as areas where more work is needed.

On the plus side, the procedures for planning have proven to be exemplary. There is a high commitment to the program within the district which in large part is a direct result of careful planning involving participants. An example of this high commitment came at the conclusion of the three-year planning and implementation phase described here. After considerable study by the district Staff Development Council, a recommendation was presented to the Board of Education and approved to open a district Staff Development Center. The center provides an outstanding facility to house the district's expanding staff development program and is looked upon by the entire staff with great pride.

Another strength has been the excellence of the training sessions themselves. These sessions have provided participants with opportunities not only to learn theory, but to see teaching models and engage in practice with low level feedback. Evaluations, completed by participants after each training session, reveal a very high level of satisfaction. Comments such as "after 20 years in the district, I can truly say that this has been the best staff development program I have experienced" or "the trainers modeled what they expected us to learn which made this an outstanding training experience-- I learned so much that will help me in my teaching" are examples of the high regard participants have had for the program and trainers.

The involvement of site administrators in implementing the program has also been outstanding. More and more, principals are seen as true instructional leaders in their schools. A common statement by teachers in the initial training sessions, attended by the principal and three teachers from each school as well as central office administrators, was how much they appreciated this expression of administrator support and commitment. This

high regard was enhanced as principals worked with their school site support teams utilizing common language and understandings. One principal indicated that such involvement did more than any thing he had ever done to help him assume his role of instructional leadership at his school.

The one area that needs more work is in follow-up, particularly in peer coaching. Because of the traditional role of teaching as an individual effort, it has been difficult to stimulate peer observation and feedback. Teacher isolationism is part of the culture of the school and difficult to overcome. The district intends to approach a resolution of this problem in two ways. First, with the opening of the new Staff Development Center and expanded staff, it is planned to build follow-up into the training as an expected outcome. Trainers will now be available to visit teachers in their classrooms following training sessions to provide coaching. Workshop participants will also receive instructions in how to give meaningful feedback. In addition, more training will be made available to mentor teachers in providing feedback.

The second approach to facilitating peer coaching among teachers will be to enrich the program of peer coaching among administrators. By assisting each other to refine their observation and conferencing skills as members of peer coaching teams, principals will also serve as models for peer coaching among teachers. This, combined with assisting principals in their role as leaders of the school site support teams, may help to bring teachers and administrators together in a spirit of collegiality. This should help to enhance peer coaching and achieve the vision of raising the level of professionalism by increasing collaboration among the staff.

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